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Letter dated 21 December 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 16 December 2010, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, transmitting the quarterly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2010 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 16 December 2010 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1943 (2010), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from August to October 2010 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the request under Security Council resolution 1943 (2010), informs the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2010. As at 25 October 2010, total ISAF strength stood at 130,432 personnel provided by 28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and 20 non-NATO countries. This includes the addition of one new country, Tonga, during the quarter.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 August to 31 October 2010, ISAF suffered 2,201 casualties, including 179 killed in action, 2,007 wounded in action and 15 non-battle-related deaths.

3. As the preparation process for transition continues, ISAF has extended its focus on the training and mentorship of various entities within the Afghan National Security Forces. Recognizing that vital gaps existed, ISAF expanded its capacity and capabilities to cover its mandate in a more comprehensive manner. Focusing on the ultimate objective of enabling Afghanistan to become self-reliant and sustainable in the very near term, NATO/ISAF invites additional United Nations member States to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing trainers, mentors and enablers for the Afghan National Security Forces as well as for the civilian sectors of governance and development.

Noteworthy points for this reporting period include the following:

(a) As reported in the Independent Election Commission press release of 20 October, the voter turnout for the parliamentary elections, 18 September 2010, was approximately 44 per cent of all registered Afghans. Afghan-led security operations before, during and following the elections prevented any major or high-profile insurgent attacks and, therefore, can be considered successful and an improvement from last year's presidential election;

(b) The Afghan National Security Forces surpassed their force strength objective of 243,000 for October 2010, three months ahead of schedule, reaching a current total of 261,000 personnel;

(c) The necessary follow-up to the endorsement of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program was the establishment of the High Peace Council, a body intended to provide strategic guidance and broad-based political support for peace and reintegration activities;

(d) In line with the commitment by the Government of Afghanistan to strengthen its accountability and combat corruption stressed at the Kabul International Conference on Afghanistan, ISAF established the Combined Joint Inter-Agency Task Force Shafafiyat ("transparency") in late August 2010. The objective of the Task Force is to foster a common understanding of the problem of corruption in Afghanistan and integrate ISAF support to anti-corruption efforts with key partners in the Government of Afghanistan and the international community;

(e) Presidential Decree No. 62, in which President Hamid Karzai ordered the disbanding of private security companies, prompted ISAF and the international community to work closely with the Government of Afghanistan to coordinate the phased implementation of the decree, ensuring that ISAF and the international community continue to focus on enhancing security and supporting improvement of governance and development, while maintaining the necessary security levels for bases, logistical convoys and development projects;

(f) Following the announcement by President Karzai in July, the Afghan National Security Council in August approved the establishment of the Afghan Local Police. The Afghan Local Police is a temporary village-focused programme working under the Ministry of Interior, aimed at accelerating counter-insurgency efforts in areas with insufficient Afghan National Security Force presence. The Afghan Local Police will serve as an early warning and initial village defence element against insurgent activity. It currently has a cap of 10,000 personnel designated for 68 sites across the country. At the end of the reporting period, 8 sites were operational, with more than 1,000 Afghan Local Police personnel assigned, and an additional 17 were planned for establishment in 2011. ISAF works to collaborate with and support officials of the Ministry of Interior in the review, selection and validation of districts designated for the establishment of Afghan Local Police units. Shuras provide the integrating platform for the Afghan Local Police programme and local leadership.

Security situation

4. The Afghan security environment remains complex, with a resilient insurgency that still retains the capacity to attack the Government of Afghanistan, the Afghan National Security Forces and the International Security Assistance Force. However, coalition operations significantly reduced the enemy's ability to attack in a number of key terrain districts during the reporting period. Risk still exists as many of the factors that sustain the insurgency and impede effective counter-insurgency operations remain. While the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF operations have increased pressure on insurgent networks over the past several months, the insurgency has proven resilient, with sustained logistics capacity and command and control. Larger and more focused security operations have begun to further increase pressure on all aspects of the insurgents' ability to operate, and in particular in their strongholds. The insurgents are likely to retain some freedom of movement, mainly in rural areas with less Afghan National Security Forces/International Security Assistance Force presence, as long as they have access to out-of-country safe havens and support networks. The strategic goal of the insurgency remains unchanged: inflict significant losses to ISAF in order to undermine international support for the mission and prompt a withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan.

5. Regionally, the security situation is as follows:

(a) *Regional Command Capital*. The security situation in Regional Command Capital was stable, and the insurgents were unable successfully to execute complex or high profile attacks in Kabul during events with high media attention (Independence Day on 19 August 2010, and parliamentary elections on 18 September 2010);

(b) *Regional Command North.* Kunduz and Baghlan provinces remain the most affected areas in this region. There are reports of uncertainty within insurgent networks, mainly caused by the increase in combined forces (ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces) and the subsequent increased operational tempo in the Regional Command North. Additionally, reintegration efforts in Baghlan and Faryab negatively affected the capabilities of the insurgent networks;

(c) *Regional Command West.* Successful International Security Assistance Force/Afghan National Security Forces operations conducted during the previous period have had a major impact on the insurgent leadership's ability to keep activity at a relatively high level. Numerous reintegration opportunities have emerged, particularly in Badghis and Farah provinces, which could indicate that insurgents' losses are having a detrimental impact on their morale and willingness to continue fighting against the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF.

(d) *Regional Command South and Regional Command Southwest.* The south and southwest of the country remain the heart of the insurgency. The Afghan National Security Forces, in partnership with ISAF, have been conducting major operations in the region to assert government control. Operations continue and progress has been made. The city of Kandahar has largely been secured, and insurgents' freedom of movement and sanctuaries in both Kandahar and Helmand provinces have gradually been reduced. On 1 August, the multinational ISAF-flagged Combined Team-Uruzgan assumed responsibility for ISAF operations in Uruzgan province.

(e) *Regional Command East.* The eastern part of Afghanistan remains a main focal point for insurgent activities. Although most were ineffective, several complex attacks against the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF and officials of the Government of Afghanistan were conducted in this region during the reporting period. The threat in the districts bordering Pakistan remains high. Access to out-of-country sanctuaries and resupply areas in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan remains a key factor in the insurgents' ability to attack Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF units, government officials and civilians.

6. Improvised explosive device attacks remained the primary cause of casualties among ISAF, the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan civilians, with a total of 2,008 detonations during the reporting period. In the same period, 2,267 devices were discovered and eliminated, representing 53 per cent of all such events. Especially towards the end of October 2010, and with increased pressure on the insurgents, the ratio between detonations and discoveries of the devices shifted positively towards the latter.

Afghan National Security Forces

7. The Afghan National Security Forces have a total of approximately 261,000 personnel as of October 2010. Having surpassed October 2010 growth targets for the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police in July, both entities have continued to expand. ISAF training capacity continues to grow, with approximately 28,000 Afghans currently in various training programmes.

8. ISAF efforts have been focused on meeting growth targets for Afghan National Security Force personnel; however, the focus is now on building a more balanced and self-sustaining force. The Afghan National Security Force training centres and

literacy programmes, which provide a basic education level (reading and writing Dari or Pashtu and mathematics) are a fundamental element of ISAF efforts to professionalize the Forces.

Afghan National Army

9. During this quarter the Afghan National Army's strength grew by approximately 24,000, expanding the force to just above 144,000, thus exceeding the October 2010 target of 134,000. The Afghan National Army continues to make steady progress towards the next growth target of 171,600 by October 2011.

10. The operational effectiveness of the Afghan National Army is progressing steadily, evidenced by lead responsibility for security during the parliamentary elections and the progressive increases in Afghan leadership in ongoing security operations in Kandahar Province. Challenges in operational effectiveness include leadership, staff planning, tactical command and control, and logistics. The focus for 2011 is fielding the institutions and organizations that support and sustain the force. The Afghan National Army's ability to sustain itself is critical to enable a successful transition to the Afghan National Security Force lead for security responsibility starting in early 2011.

11. While aggregate strength numbers are consistently achieved, the Afghan National Army's structure is still unbalanced. With mitigation efforts, it is assessed that the deficit of officers and non-commissioned officers will stabilize in 2011. Two new training facilities are being established with the capacity to train an additional 6,000 non-commissioned officers annually. Current projections predict that the deficit of non-commissioned officers will shrink by approximately 4,700 over the next year.

12. Included in the growth of the Afghan National Army is the commissioning of 29 female Second Lieutenants from officer candidate school, supporting the objective of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). This is the first such event since the fall of the Taliban from power, marking a major step towards advancing gender rights in Afghanistan.

Afghan Air Force

13. The Afghan Air Force continues to make progress, although like other parts of the Afghan National Security Forces, it still faces some professional challenges. Its strength has increased by 41 per cent (from 2,797 to 3,964) since November 2009, with 4,240 airmen projected by November 2010. The inventory of aircraft also increased, growing by 19 per cent, from 42 to 47 serviceable aircraft. The Afghan Air Force requirement is a target of 146 airframes and 5,600 airmen by fiscal year 2016.

14. Four Afghan Air Force Mi-17 helicopters provided disaster relief to both Afghanistan and Pakistan following recent devastating floods. During 27 days, Afghan Air Force crews executed over 400 sorties, conducted 120 life-saving rescues, transported 1,904 passengers and delivered 188 tons of critical supplies in Pakistan.

Afghan National Police

15. During this quarter, Afghan National Police strength grew by close to 1,000, expanding the force to approximately 117,000. Like the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police surpassed the 31 October 2010 target strength of 109,000 in July, three months ahead of schedule. Overall, the Afghan National Police continued to make progress towards its future target of 136,000 by October 2011.

16. Although overall Afghan National Police recruiting met monthly goals, the Afghan National Civil Order Police attrition rate continued to exceed the 1.4 per cent target. Afghan National Civil Order Police recruiting also remained a challenge, with too few recruits joining this competent force. The Ministry of Interior and NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan are looking at ways to mitigate both of those negative factors.

17. The professionalization of the Afghan National Police continues to be the highest priority for the Mission, with "leader development" and literacy training seen as pivotal to the process. As in the previous quarter, the turnover of personnel continues to place intense demands on the institutional training establishment with officer and non-commissioned officer growth rates lagging behind overall force growth. Low literacy rates are extending training requirements and limiting the output of the training base. Field promotions helped to mitigate non-commissioned officer shortages, but this will be a continuing problem throughout the next year. Expansion of the training base is flexible enough to meet current training demands.

18. Afghan National Police operational effectiveness improved slightly this quarter. Challenges in effectiveness include logistics and leadership. The Ministry of Interior is working with the Mission to better resource the Afghan National Police logistically.

Institutional capacity

19. Development of the institutional capabilities of both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior has made progress this quarter, but is still assessed as needing international support. The most recent Ministerial Development Board projects that the Ministry of Interior will achieve self-sufficiency no earlier than December 2012. Institutional development lags behind force growth owing to conscious decisions to expand the combat force at the expense of support personnel. Rebalancing the force is critical for 2011 to reduce reliance on ISAF and to establish the links between the fielded force and the governing ministries.

Civilian casualties

20. The significant increase in ISAF troop numbers and the high operational tempo has not resulted in an increase of civilian casualties caused by ISAF this quarter when compared to the previous reporting period. ISAF maintains its commitment to take all necessary steps to shield civilians from harm. The number of civilian casualties caused by insurgents continued to increase, expanding by approximately 50 per cent compared to the previous quarter. Ninety per cent of all casualties suffered by civilians are caused by insurgent activities.

Counter-narcotics

21. The drug trade continues to fund the insurgency. ISAF continued to support the Government of Afghanistan and its specialized units in the conduct of the overall Afghan counter-narcotics strategy. During the reporting period, ISAF operations conducted in support of Afghan units (Afghan National Security Forces, Counter-Narcotics Police) resulted in the seizure of 14 tons of opium, 2.2 tons of heroin, 2.6 tons of hashish and 70 kg of morphine worth an estimated value of $9 million. Furthermore, the Combined Joint Inter-Agency Task Force-Nexus performed information-sharing tasks with the Joint Narcotics Analysis Centre, the Interagency Operations Coordination Centre, the Drug Enforcement Administration of the United States of America and the Serious Organised Crime Agency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to develop a common operating picture at the regional, strategic and international levels.

Governance

22. To ensure enduring security, ISAF and responsible Afghan ministries successfully cooperated with the Independent Election Committee in the conduct of the Afghan parliamentary elections in September 2010.

23. A significant initiative to improve the security environment was the Afghan peace and reintegration programme, which was endorsed at the Kabul Conference in July. ISAF has partnered with the Government of Afghanistan to support the programme's further development and implementation. ISAF has and will continue to support the programme's public awareness activities and assist the Government of Afghanistan in their outreach to encourage insurgent fighters to lay down their weapons and peacefully reintegrate into Afghan society. Furthermore, ISAF has continued its suppo.. to enable the Government of Afghanistan to establish structures at both the national and subnational levels to facilitate effective reintegration.

24. The gradually improved security environment that the International Security Assistance Force and the Afghan National Security Forces are delivering in and around the major population centres has served as a catalyst for local governance. Although challenges still remain, the following are of note:

(a) The allocation by individual ISAF contributors of Commanders' Emergency Response Procedures projects in Kandahar Province has been helping Government of Afghanistan officials from both the short- and long-term perspectives to respond to pressing community needs. Military commanders and civilian experts are working in concert with local leaders to lay the foundation for the delivery of basic services such as clean water, education and health care;

(b) Throughout Helmand Province, efforts have been supporting linking villages and districts to the provincial government. Daily shuras with village elders are progressively changing local Afghan perceptions and bridging the gap between the local and district governments, thereby expanding linkages to the central Government through the provision of a secure and stable environment;

(c) The first Afghan-run regional development conference, held in Mazar-e-Sharif with participants from the Government of Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force and the international community, was an important milestone in the evolution of Afghan governance and development. More

importantly, it met the Kabul conference commitment to align national and subnational governance agendas.

25. Through routine civil-military cooperation performed by the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in support of other government institutions, ISAF continuously engaged with Afghan officials at the national, subnational and local levels.

Development

26. This reporting period, facilitated by an increased ISAF and Afghan National Security Force presence and operational progress in key population centres in the south of Afghanistan, there was also a gradual improvement in the coordination of security and development efforts alongside enhanced outreach by the Government of Afghanistan in the region. For this reporting period the following are noteworthy:

(a) Operation Hamkari conducted by the Afghan National Security Forces/ISAF in Kandahar Province delivered improvements in the physical security infrastructure of Kandahar city. The improved security conditions have enabled new businesses to open in and around Kandahar city, increased freedom of movement and enhanced protection of the population. The Government of Afghanistan and development initiatives by the international community have grown alongside ISAF and Afghan National Security Force joint security operations — each reinforcing the gains of the other;

(b) Operation Moshtarak conducted by the Afghan National Security Forces/ISAF in Helmand Province has shown encouraging indications of the enabling effects that a steady accumulation of security gains can generate for governance and development efforts in the area. The improved security situation allowed voters in Marjah to register and to establish four election polling stations for the parliamentary elections. In September 2010, Helmand witnessed for the first time in six years the opening of a high school in Marjah district along with three other schools.

27. Evidence of slow but steady progress in development was seen by increased government revenues and small improvements in health, education, the macroeconomy and infrastructure. Notwithstanding reported signs of progress, the ability of governance and development to keep pace with security operations still remains at risk owing to the current limitations of Afghan capabilities and capacities across the country.

28. The International Security Assistance Force therefore continues to recognize and stress the importance of recognizing the explicit link between governance, security and development. Without persistent and successful growth in all three areas, gains in any one are likely to be unsustainable in the longer term. An increase in civilian involvement is judged necessary for an irreversible movement towards transition and the goal outlined by the Government of Afghanistan for the Afghan National Security Forces to be in the lead for security across the country by the end of 2014.